

## TALKING ABOUT OPIUM.

Able Speech by Ex-Minister L. A. Thurston.

## OPEN AMERICAN LEAGUE MEETING.

The Ex-Minister Thinks Legislature Should Attend to Other Matters. Annexation the Key-note—Settle that First—Liquor is Next—Prohibition.

There were about fifty persons present at the American League hall last night to hear Hon. L. A. Thurston deliver an address on the opium and liquor traffic in Hawaii. The speaker was introduced by T. B. Murray, president of the league, in a few remarks. Mr. Thurston began his address by saying:

"Some days ago the suggestion was offered, in an evening paper, the Star, I think it was, regarding the organization of a third house. I believe it is a capital idea. What the people lack in Honolulu is an opportunity to compare notes on topics of public interest. The newspapers take up subjects of a political interest and go at it hammer and tongs. It would be better if we were to meet oftener and confer on certain aims and objects which are for the public good.

Such conferences should serve to soften the lines which divide the different nationalities on the islands.

"I was not asked, and have not come here to make a set address. I will speak on the bill before the Legislature, and trust there will be other speakers to follow.

"In regard to the liquor question, it is needless to say that the community is divided. We are all aware that only a short time ago Governor Tillman of South Carolina took up the cudgels in enforcing the law against illicit liquor selling, and in the enforcement of a law based on the Gothenberg system. You are aware that his action excited much feeling, and it was necessary to call out the entire State militia to enforce that act, and three-fourths of them threw down their arms. But Governor Tillman enforced the law against all opposition. Not, however, without first endangering the State in a civil war.

"There are those who earnestly believe prohibition is the only plan to follow; and they believe that anyone who opposes them is possessed of the devil. I do not believe in it, because I do not believe that any law can be stronger than the people behind it. In Honolulu the conditions are not right; the better class of people forbids the success of any such measure.

"It is not a question to be discussed. There are graver measures to be legislated upon than whether or not the Gothenberg system is right. It is best to deal direct with the recognized evil. There are men here just as good as anyone who take and will take liquor until they die; it is not a matter on which we can draw lines.

No one who walks up Nuuanu street will say that whisky is not an evil; no one will say that the whisky business in Honolulu is not a bad thing. The saloon men are not a bad sort. I have done business with them and have ever found them honorable. But if we walk up Nuuanu street on a Saturday night and see the drunken men throwing away money, their wages for the week's work, can we do ought but regret the existence of the evil among us?

"I know from experience that the liquor men are public-spirited, but that has no effect upon the evil—it still remains.

"The Gothenberg system has been established at various times in different countries, not because the missionaries wanted it, but because the conditions were such that the country demanded it and was willing to accept and enforce it. In German speaking countries, where it is customary to baptize babies in beer, it has been adopted.

"The use of liquor in some places has grown to such an extent that it is a nuisance to public health, but prohibition will not stop it to any material extent. It does not do to cut off the supply from the public if they feel that they want it.

"It is very easy to be controlled, perhaps, by taking away the attractions, breaking up what have been the social centers. It is the social features of drinking that are bad.

"It is a well established fact that a man can buy a bottle of liquor under the Gothenberg system, or act, and take it home with him; but it is also true that he will take but one drink at home to ten in a saloon. The Gothenberg system takes away these special and enticing features. The saloons are controlled by companies who turn over their profits to the Government, and the people are indirectly benefited thereby.

"In South Carolina the Government controls and sells, and it is everywhere it may be bought the cheapest. The liquor is always pure and is sold only in bottles and at fixed prices. That State is not running the liquor business on fine lines; there is no sentiment behind it, for I doubt if there are many people south of Mason and Dixon's line who do not like a little Kentucky whisky. Whether we shall take up the same law here is a grave question to answer. For one say No! We are in a transitory state, with factions and cliques. There never was until three years ago a single question leading up to the welfare of the people upon which the public stood shoulder to shoulder. That question upon which we stand so united is annexation.

"Until that is accomplished nothing else should be considered. The liquor question and some other measures are

trivial compared with the one great aim. The discussion of the minor matters creates feelings akin to strife.

"The trouble in South Carolina was not between the missionaries and any other class of people; it was between all classes, in politics and out. The former friends of the Governor were then among the strongest opponents of the measure, and the battle is not ended yet.

If the Legislature should pass such a law here, and confiscate the property of the liquor men, it would cause an excitement that would border on a revolution, and while that was going on we could not stick together on any one issue. Annexation would be lost sight of. I believe that in time we will have to adopt some plan to regulate, not wipe out, the liquor business; but I hope the legislature will not bother with it while there are important matters to be considered.

"Regarding the opium bill my friends say I am a heretic because I have not taken sides with the leaders in an effort to kill the opium bill. It has been published all over the world that opium was the cause of the overthrow of the monarchy. That is not so. That it was one of the causes I believe, but so far as I am concerned it was very small.

"I did not vote against the bill in 1892, nor do I feel today that it is not the best thing for the country. The complaint in 1892 was not so much against the passage of the opium bill, but the manner of passing it. Men who had pledged themselves to stand with us and by us were seen coming from the Palace with leis around their necks, and voted for the passage of the bill. Some people thought then, and do now, that the passage of such an act was murderous.

"I do not think the financial side of the opium subject should be considered. Opium is an unmitigated evil anywhere, and compared with liquor it was an undivided evil. Liquor has always been used by our race, but there has never been a use of opium that does not work harm. It is a death-dealing evil that should not be kept on.

"Does prohibition prohibit? This is not a new question. Under license the use of the drug increased. Those of you who were here will remember how young men who began the use of the drug became total physical wrecks. Those who are not wrecks today are dead from the effects of its use. There are men here who say: 'There's no use trying to save the Kanakas; they are going to the devil anyhow; give them the same chance as the whites and let them get on if they can.'

"But this is not the way to look at it. The Government must face things as they are. We have taken it upon ourselves, the task of conducting the affairs of Government, and it is as much a part of those duties to look after the Hawaiian as if he was a younger brother.

Prohibition does prohibit, to a certain extent; the police records show it and you seldom find a Kanaka arrested for smoking opium or having it in his possession. It is only those who have the habit who take the risk.

"A stricter law should be made and a higher penalty fixed for the crime. The fine for having opium in possession should be \$200, with the option given to the culprit of leaving the country, never to return. In that way from 500 to 1,000 fiends would be out of the country in a year. In this way the demand for opium would decrease, and the supply which tempts the smuggler would not be required. There never was an opium fiend in jail who earned his board, and that is only 18 cents a day.

"So much as against license. There is such a large profit in opium that there is no use trying to keep it out, and there is too much temptation to the forty-dollar policeman or the hundred-dollar customs guard to expect them to assist in keeping it out. They need not be bribed to pass opium that they know is on a vessel; they simply take a couple of hundred dollars to look the other way.

"So long as these conditions exist we will have demoralization in the custom house and police department. Many of the cases come to the surface, but there are many we never hear of. It is seldom that principals are brought to justice, and the public has grown not to expect it, and they have become used to a laxity in the law. The profit on smuggled opium is so high that the men can afford to pay largely for protection, and the force is demoralized in consequence.

"I believe it is preferable to remain as we are, but with an increase in the amount of fine, because of the preponderance of evil that is against it. It has gone abroad, whether right or wrong, that one of the reasons for the overthrow of the monarchy was the licensing of opium. We can hardly dare to pass a bill that the world believes was the cause of our government toppling over. John D. Spreckles, who is now a particular friend of the Government, has given it out as his opinion, and others hold the same. In my own mind I do not think it sound for the Legislature to take the matter up at this season; it will cause comment on the other side. There are other live issues, and opium is an old question; if it was not it would be different. Here it is thirty years old, and it will do to let it remain as it is.

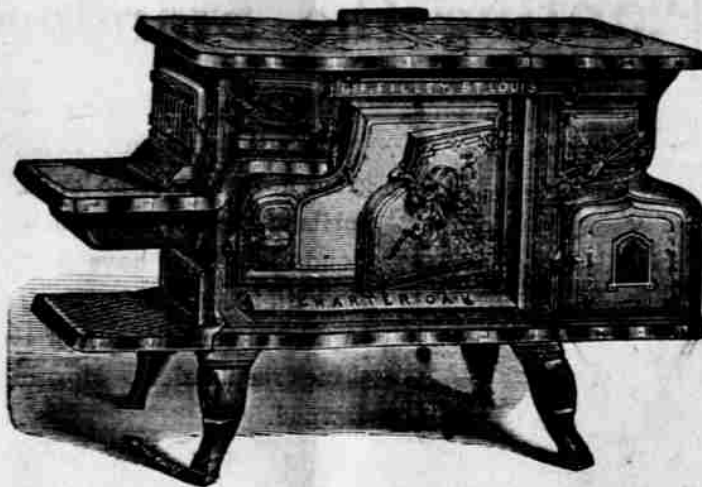
"In the civil war in America many of Lincoln's friends abused him for not putting a stop to the war and letting the slave question go. He held the Government together on one single issue, and he was faithful to his trust.

"Let us work for annexation to the United States, and when that is accomplished it will be time to take up smaller issues." (Applause.)

In the absence of A. G. M. Robertson, President Murray called on Ed Towse for a speech, to which he responded gracefully. Rev. H. W. Peck followed Mr. Towse.

The funeral of the late Grace Tolbert took place from the Catholic Cathedral yesterday afternoon. E. A. Williams was in charge.

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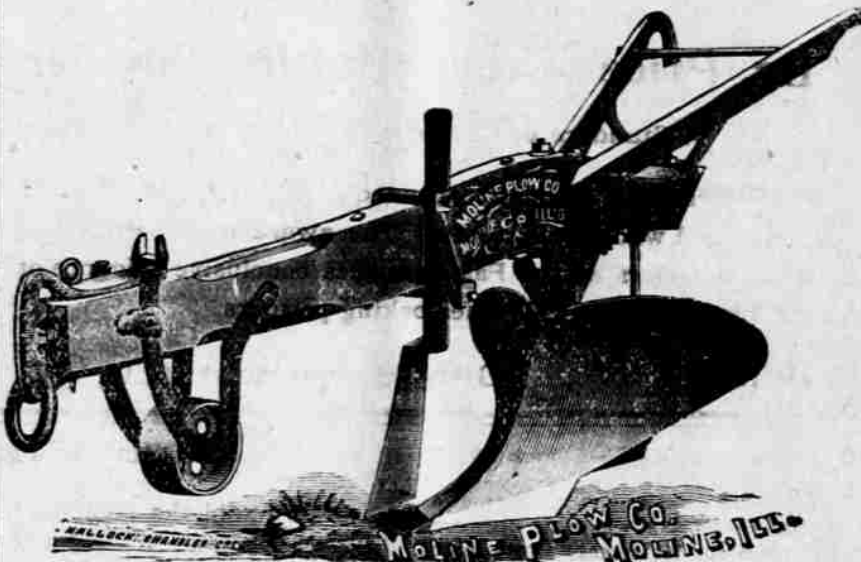
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DEAR SIRS:—Regarding the aluminum cane knives which you sold us some time ago, allow us to state that same have given us the utmost satisfaction, and we think them superior to any one knife we have used. The knives are light and durable, and keep a very good edge. The handles are also a great improvement, and are well shaped for Japs. Our men always try to secure an aluminum knife in preference to others, which we think the very best recommendation. We remain,  
Yours truly,  
H. P. FAYE & CO.

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1-Authorized Capital, £25,000,000

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Paid-up Capital - - £87,500 0 0

2-Fire Funds - - 2,410,992 7 3

3-Life and Annuity Funds - - 8,572,525 14 11

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Revenue Fire Branch 1,410,956 18 7

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